

21 TOWN KELLOE BANK

One of the most extensive areas of primary Magnesian Limestone grassland in Britain contained within a unique post-glacial landform.



Town Kelloe Bank



Fragrant orchid



Blue Moor Grass

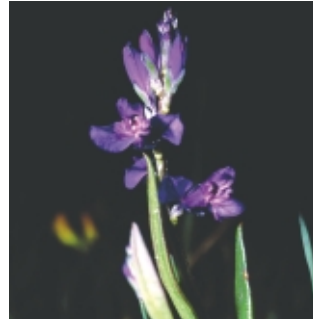
The reserve is located within what remains of a magnificent glacial lake overspill meltwater channel system created towards the end of the last glaciation some 18,000 years ago. This has left a very distinctive landscape feature consisting of a steep sided, winding valley cutting through the Magnesian Limestone escarpment. The thin soils on the valley sides support extremely species rich Magnesian Limestone grassland characterised by grasses such as Blue Moor Grass and Quaking Grass. The herbs include most of the classic Magnesian Limestone flora such as Wild Thyme, Salad Burnet, Milkwort, Autumn Gentian and large amounts of Common Rockrose, which provides the larval food plant for a colony of Northern Brown Argus butterflies. North facing slopes with wet flushes also contain distinctive plants such as Butterwort and the largest population Birds-eye Primrose found in County Durham.

Some of the other butterflies frequently seen include Common Blue, Ringlet, Small Copper and Large Skipper.

Areas of developing scrub and Ash woodland provides habitat variation on the thicker more nutrient rich soils.

Whilst the flora is very well recorded, the reserve was only recently acquired by the Trust in 2002 and therefore much remains to be discovered about its fauna.

Best seen – April to July for orchids, May/June for birds-eye primrose, June/July for Northern Brown Argus.

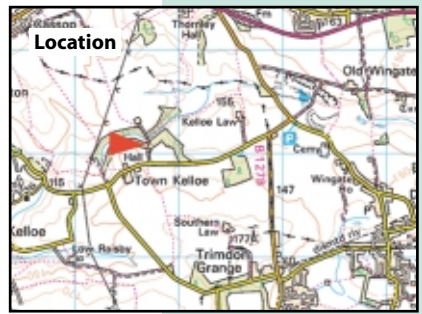
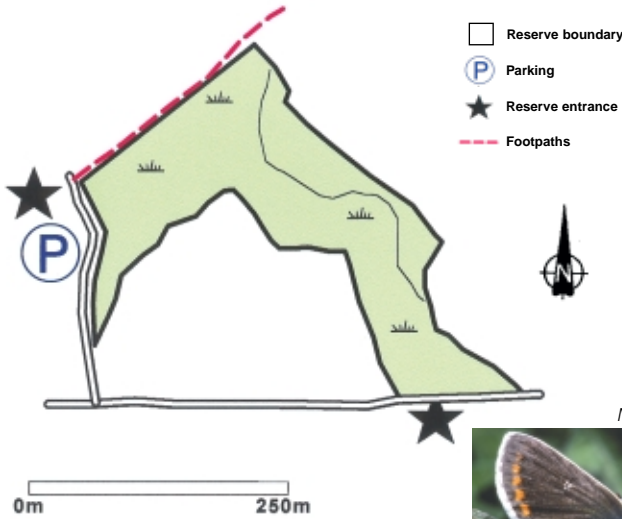


Milkwort



Ringlet

TOWN KELLOE BANK



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General Information

Ownership:
Durham Wildlife Trust

Area: 5 hectares

Grid Reference:
NZ357371

O.S. Explorer Map No: 305

Parking access to site:
Parking on roadside for 2 cars.
Access only by guided visit.
(contact Rainton Meadows)

Public transport:
Bus service from Durham
& Sedgfield to Kelloe.

Dogs: No dogs allowed on site

Accessibility: ▲▲▲▲

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Management

Maintenance of magnesian limestone grassland depends upon preventing competition from vigorous grasses and scrub species. Town Kelloe Bank is managed using a combination of controlled winter grazing with sheep and cattle, small scale mowing and clearance of encroaching gorse and thorn scrub. Grazing animals ensure that there is not a build up of leaf litter from year to year, which inhibits herb growth and promotes the growth of rank grasses. Limited trampling of the turf by stock, also creates areas of bare ground which can be colonised by herb species

The reserve is managed in partnership with English Nature under the "Reserves Enhancement Scheme".

Green Woodpecker (©RSPB)



Northern Brown Argus



Birds-eye Primrose



Birds-eye primrose – more often associated with upland habitats, this exquisite pink flowered plant thrives in calcareous flushes with a flow of lime rich water.

Location

The reserve is located between Trimdon Grange and Coxhoe, 1/4 mile east of the hamlet of Town Kelloe. From the traffic lights in the centre of Coxhoe, take the B6291 towards Kelloe, turning right at the first sharp junction. Follow the minor road through Kelloe and turn right at the next T-junction towards Town Kelloe. Turn left 200 yards after passing Kelloe Hall Farm down a rough farm track and parking is available for 2 cars opposite the entrance to the reserve gates. There are no footpaths on site and the site is grazed for much of the year therefore access is by guided visit only (contact Rainton Meadows for details).

Durham Wildlife Trust, Rainton Meadows,
Chilton Moor, Houghton-le-Spring,
Tyne & Wear DH4 6PU

Tel: 0191 5843112

Fax: 0191 5843934

Charity no. 501038

www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/durham/

